DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 077 347 HE 004 104

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TITLE	A Profile of University of Maryland, College Park, Freshmen, 1972-73.
INSTITUTION	Maryland Univ., College Park. Counseling Center.
REPORT NO	RR-1-73
PUB DATE	73
NOTE	14p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*College Freshmen; College Students; *Higher Education; Student Attitudes; *Student Characteristics; *Student Opinion; *Surveys
IDENTIFIERS	College Park; *University of Maryland

ABSTRACT

This document presents a profile of the 4,806 new freshmen entering the College Park campus of the University of Maryland in fall 1972. They had mean SAT scores of approximately 493 Verbal and 531 Math and more than half ranked in the top 25% of their high school graduating classes. About 10% were black, 1% Oriental, 1% Spanish surname and 1% native American. Freshmen tended to live with parents or relatives (48%), in residence halls (35%), or in an apartment or house not with relatives (11%). Freshmen considered friendliness and independence to be their outstanding characteristics. They felt that a college degree was the only way they could enter a particular job or graduate or professional school. Only 11% felt that intercollegiate athletics should be deemphasized, but 46% were against a mandatory athletic fee. Freshmen favored a university sponsored day-care facility, and they felt the issues of the 1972 election year were ecology and pollution, the Vietnam war, racism and poverty Students expected many exam items to be unrelated to coursework, and listed small group study as their preferred learning experience. (HS)

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1973

A PROFILE OF UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK, FRESHMEN, 1972-73

Joan A. Lewis and William E. Sedlacek

Research Report #1-73

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SUMMARY

4,806 new freshmen entered the College Park campus of the University of Maryland in Fall 1972. They had mean SAT scores of approximately 493 Verbal and 531 Math and more than half ranked in the top 25% of their high school graduating classes. About 10% were black, 1% Oriental, 1% Spanish surname and 1% Native American (Brooks and Sedlacek, 1973). 3,453 (74%) of the new freshmen completed the University Student Census (USC) during Summer Orientation 1972.

General Characteristics:

Freshmen tended to live with parents or relatives (48%), in residence halls (33%) or in an apartment or house not with relatives (11%). Forty-two percent are working and 23% more are looking for work. Freshmen attend the University for its academic program (26%), because it is inexpensive (25%), or for its geographical location (22%). Students received the most support for their decisions to attend college from parents: males mostly from fathers (45%) and females from both parents (33%).

Personal Characteristics:

Freshmen considered friendliness (22%) and independence (14%) to be their outstanding characteristics. They felt that a college degree was the only way they could enter a particular job (25%) or graduate or professional school (20%) but also felt that getting a good job mainly depends on being in the right place at the right time (49%).

Expectations of the University:

Only 11% felt that intercollegiate athletics should be deemphasized but 46% were against a mandatory athletic fee. Freshmen favored a University sponsored day care facility (women 62%; men 48%). Students expected many exam items to be unrelated to coursework (45%), and listed small group study as their preferred learning experience (37%), expected academic credit for supervised community service (70%), but were not in favor of a required course in race relations (40%). Thirty-six percent felt the University should actively recruit blacks and 44% did not know why there were so few blacks at the University.

Political and Social Views:

Freshmen felt the University should use its influence to improve social conditions in the State (61%), and that demonstrations were useful (65%) but those who disrupt the normal operation of the school should be suspended (40%). They felt the issues of the 1972 election year were ecology and pollution (27%), the Vietnam war (22%), racism (15%) and poverty (13%).

Many other responses are summarized and discussed in the report.

4,806 new freshmen entered the College Park campus of the University of Maryland in Fall 1972. They had mean SAT scores of approximately 493 Verbal and 531 Math[1], and more than half ranked in the top 25% of their high school graduating classes. About 10% were black, 1% Oriental, 1% Spanish surname and 1% Native American (Brooks and Sedlacek, 1973). 3,453 (74%) of the new freshmen completed the University Student Census (USC) during Summer Orientation 1972. The remainder of this report will summarize responses to the USC.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The majority of the new freshmen students intended to be living off campus and to be working part time. Thirty-three percent of the students responding to the University Student Census (USC) indicated they would be living on campus; females (41%) seemed more inclined to be on campus than males (25%). Fifty-three percent of the respondents planned to live off campus, while 14% indicated they weren't sure, didn't respond, or indicated "other" on the form[2]. Most freshmen not living in dorms are living with parents, guardians, or relatives (48%). Only 4% of the freshmen indicated they planned to live in a fraternity or sorority. Eleven percent plan to live in an apartment or house other than with relatives.

Most freshmen plan to work during the school year. Forty-two percent are working, while another 23% are looking for work. More females (34%) than males (23%) plan not to work. Of those working, males have a higher weekly income than females: 21% of the males are making over $39 per week,

[1] Based on Spring 1972 freshmen.
[2] Percentages will not always equal 100 due to rounding, no response, or elimination of "other" responses.

while only 9% of the females are in this range. However, men will be working more hours per week than will women.

Freshmen said they came to the University of Maryland because it offered the desired academic program (26%), because it is relatively inexpensive (25%), or because of its geographic location (22%). Seven percent said they came because friends or relatives were attending or had attended. Three percent came because they weren't accepted elsewhere. Only one percent came primarily on the recommendation of a high school teacher or counselor.

In answer to the question "From whom have you gotten the most support in your decision to attend college? " most students listed their parents as having the most influence. There is an interesting relationship between the sex of the child and which parent was listed as most supportive. The male students felt more support from fathers (45%) than from mothers (23%), while female students felt equal support from each parent (33%). Mothers seem to be taking a more active role in encouraging their daughters to go to college than their sons, while fathers seem to have more influence on their sons than do mothers on this question. High school teachers and counselors each rated 3% on this supportive scale.

When asked what was expected to be the hardest part of adjusting to college, most students responded that studying efficiently (28%), budgeting time (14%), earning satisfactory grades (14%), and selecting a major (14%) worried them most. Males were slightly more anxious in all these areas except budgeting time. Females were more concerned about suddenly being expected to be a critical and independent thinker (11%) than were males (6%). Seven percent were concerned about their finances,

6% worried about making friends, and 4% were most concerned with whether to get involved in campus issues.

Freshmen showed the strongest interest for counseling in the area of vocational and educational plans (38%). They were also concerned with study skills (20%) and reading skills (10%). Only 5% expressed the desire for counseling for emotional and social concerns. Five percent wanted to develop a larger vocabulary, 4% wanted help with writing skills, and less than 1% wanted help with spelling. Twelve percent responded that they weren't interested in any of the counseling services.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

When asked which characteristic best described them, students responded:

	Total	Male	Female
Self confidence	7%	10%	5%
Independence	17%	19%	15%
Friendliness	22%	17%	28%
Sticking to a job	10%	10%	9%
Self control	10%	11%	8%
Intellectual curiosity	14%	14%	13%
Specific academic goals	8%	8%	8%
Other	12%	11%	12%
	100%	100%	98%

As can be seen, the women chose friendliness more often than did men, while men tended to choose self confidence and independence more often than women.

In a somewhat related question, the students were asked to respond in agreement or disagreement to the statement "No matter how hard you try, some people just don't like you." Sixty-two percent of the males agreed with that statement as did 60% of the females. Nineteen percent of the women disagreed while 17% of the men disagreed.

The students were asked what they felt contributed most to their development over the last year. Many responded that friendships made (24%) and social life (dating, parties, etc. - 21%) contributed most. Again, women responded more strongly to friendships than did men. Job experience was listed by 16% of all students, 6% listed contacts with teacher(s) and 5% were most influenced by coursework.

The large majority of freshmen came from public high schools with a college-academic course (76%). Eleven percent came from parochial schools, and 4% from other private schools. Ninety percent said they came from a college-academic curriculum, whereas 9 percent listed general or commercial coursework.

When students were asked to rate the effectiveness of their high school counselors, 40% said they had little contact with them. The counselors were seen as being most effective in handling paperwork and forms and least effective in helping with personal problems, helping decide which college to attend, and what major to pursue.

There were several questions dealing with vocational goals. The majority of students were either somewhat uncertain (29%) or quite certain

about their plans (29%). Fifteen percent had no specific goal, while 11% had a clearly fixed vocational interest. Forty percent of the students decided on their vocational goal during their junior or senior year of high school.

In responding to the statement "I would like a job which would require a lot of traveling," more females (41%) agreed than males (33%). Thirty-four percent of the males weren't interested in this type of work, while 30% of the females disagreed with the statement.

Perhaps as an indication of how the tight job market has influenced the expectations of these students, 49% agreed with the statement that "getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time," 31% disagreed, and 17% remained neutral.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Most students said their most compelling current educational objectives were to develop skills directly applicable to a career (31%) and finding a direction for a career or life's work (20%). Seventeen percent mainly wanted to develop intellectual interests and appreciation of ideas. Fifteen percent of the women were hoping to develop independence in thinking and behavior, as opposed to 8% of the men. This relates to the table summarized on page 3, noting some of the differences between male and female self concepts.

The following is a table of how students responded when asked why they felt it was important to earn their college degree.

	Total	Male	Female
College graduates get better jobs	12%	15%	10%
A college degree is the only way by which I can enter my chosen job	25%	22%	28%
Parents and relatives expect me to	3%	3%	3%
The opportunity to meet and know many new and different people	10%	6%	14%
College graduates earn more money	4%	6%	3%
Experience gained from extracurricular activities	4%	4%	3%
I enjoy studying and academic work	7%	6%	8%
I must have a degree in order to enter graduate or professional school	20%	24%	15%
Other	15%	14%	16%
	100%	100%	100%

The students were also told that about 50% of university students typically leave before finishing their degree and were asked to project into the future and give a reason why they might be leaving. Twenty-one percent responded they were absolutely certain they would finish their degrees (males 22%, females 19%). Seventeen percent thought they might leave because of disinterest in their studies (males 18%, females 15%). Eighteen percent of the women felt that marriage would be the reason for them to leave school while only 3% of the males listed this reason. Eleven percent felt that they might lack academic abillty, and 10% thought they might have a problem financing their education.

When asked at what time they chose their major field of study, 30% responded this decision was made during their senior year. Twenty-three

percent said they hadn't decided, and 12% decided before their freshman year of high school. Eighteen percent felt their junior year was the decision year. The rest responded sophomore year, freshman year, or other.

Thirty-nine percent of these students felt they wouldn't continue their education beyond the baccalaureate degree (females 48%, males 31%). Twenty-five percent expect to continue for one or two years of graduate school, with a fairly equal response from both sexes. Only 5% plan to get their PhD (males 6%, females 4%). Medical schools and law schools are still more sought after by males than females. Fourteen percent of the males aspire to medical training as opposed to 6% of the females; and law schools attract 7% of the males as opposed to 2% of the females. Only 3% responded that they didn't have intentions of finishing the bachelor's degree.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

During orientation week, many students already felt a part of the student body, even though the majority of the student body wasn't present. Fifty-two percent responded that they were a part of the scene, while only 16% disagreed.

Most of the students were very much in favor of the role of intercollegiate athletics on campus. Only 11% felt sports should be deemphasized. However, 46% responded that they were not in favor of a mandatory student athletic fee of $15 per semester for University athletic programs; 22% were in favor of this fee.

The students were in favor of the University sponsoring a Day Care Center for preschool children (women 62%, men, 48%). Thirty-four percent

were neutral to the idea; 9% were opposed. The students were asked if they wanted direct bus service from downtown Baltimore to campus and from downtown Washington to campus. In regards to Baltimore, 39% were in favor of this service, 53% were neutral, 5% didn't want it. Forty-nine percent wanted to see bus service from Washington, 44% were neutral, 4% were opposed.

Freshmen showed quite an interesting response to the statement "Many times exam questions are so unrelated to coursework that studying is really useless." Forty-five percent of the students agreed with this statement, twenty-three percent disagreed, 27% were neutral. Whether this 45% positive response is a reflection of the reputation of the University or a reaction to past education, it isn't very flattering to our educational institutions. Or this response may be a measure of student tendency to excuse some of their past performances on exams!

In a University as large as this one, it is not surprising to find that students are apprehensive about large lecture classes. Seven percent listed the lecture as their preferred learning experience. Many more students felt they would prefer working in small group study (37%). Fourteen percent said they wouldn't mind large lecture sessions once a week if this were combined with small group sessions lead by teaching assistants. Fourteen percent said they would prefer independent study. The least desired form of instruction was the TV lecture (1%).

The majority of the freshmen expected that there would be many facilities and opportunities for individual creative activities on campus (83%). They also felt that programs should be set up whereby academic credit could be earned for supervised community service (70%).

When asked if the University has any procedure by which credit can be earned by exam without taking the course, 42% answered "yes," but most of these students didn't know the procedure. Forty-six percent answered that they didn't know if there was such a policy or not.

A few questions were asked about specific types of courses. More women than men expected to take a course on women's studies (24% and 4% respectively). Many women were neutral to this idea (46%), while many men (46%) did not expect to take such a course.

A large number of students felt that the University should not offer a required course in race relations (40%). Thirty percent were neutral toward the idea, while 27% were in favor of it. This may not be as much an indication of prejudice as a reaction to the word "required." Women were more inclined to such a requirement (30%) than men (25%). More women (30%) expected to take a course in black studies than men (18%). Forty-three percent of the males indicated they did not expect to take this type of course as opposed to 28% of the females feeling this way.

These students were not too sure what would be the best way for the University to increase the black enrollment. Thirty-six percent felt the University should actively recruit black students, 32% were neutral, and 29% didn't like the idea. Forty-four percent didn't know why there are so few blacks at the University of Maryland. Twelve percent thought it was because blacks preferred black colleges, 10% felt the University's racist image discouraged blacks, 8% thought racist practices of the University was the reason, and only 5% thought the University had a tough academic reputation which scared the blacks away. Twenty percent listed "other" as the reason.

What is the best way for the state to provide higher education for blacks and whites? Freshmen were no more decisive than the state and federal officials trying to answer this question. Twenty-one percent felt that the best method was for the state to "improve the quality of the predominantly black colleges in the state to bring them up to the level of the University." Twenty percent felt we should just "let things happen naturally," with no type of intervention. Twelve percent felt there should be some active effort to draw whites to black colleges and blacks to white schools. Only four percent wanted a quota system established at all schools. The remainder (20%) of the responses fell in the category of "other." We may never know what secret solutions fall under the latter option.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL VIEWS

Freshmen have some responses to those people of power and those who want power in the realm of politics. To the University administrators, they say that the University should use its influence to improve social conditions of this state (61% agree, 10% disagree). To the demonstrators, they say that these demonstrations are not a waste of time (65% agree, 13% disagree), but that demonstrators probably should be suspended if they disrupt the normal operations of the University (40% agree, 29% disagree).

And a final note to the aspirants to the high political offices of this nation: The issues of the 1972 election year were ecology and pollution (27%), the Vietnam war (22%), racism (15%), and poverty (13%). Six percent were concerned most about the economy, 5% about the drug problem, 1% about sexism, and 1% felt the radicals were the cause of it all.

References

Brooks, G. C., Jr. and Sedlacek, W. E. The racial census of University of Maryland, College Park, students, 1972-73 Cultural Study Center Research Report #2-73. University of Maryland, 1973.